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Sgt. Groth Denies JFK Ties

Not Secret Service 'Agent';

Cites Police Record

By BOB SELTZNER
(Of The Daily Calumet Staff)

Sgt. Daniel Groth of the Cook County State's Attorney's police charged yesterday that legal researcher Sherman Skolnick's suit questioning his Chicago police record is "irresponsible." Groth told The Daily Calumet in an exclusive interview that his Chicago police service record dates back to October 1, 1957, and that he has had the civil service rank of sergeant for three years.

Groth was responding to a suit filed in the U. S. District Court for the northern district of Illinois (Eastern Division) by Skolnick on Monday. Skolnick filed the suit against the National Archives and Records Service, charging the Archives with concealing documents and records of interviews relating to the assassination in November of 1963 of President John Kennedy.

In his suit, Skolnick alleged that Sergeant Groth was a key figure in an aborted plot to kill the President in Chicago three weeks before the actual assassination in Dallas.

Skolnick charged that Groth "was known to often hang around the U. S. Secret Service office in Chicago." Skolnick alleged in the suit "whether Groth was actually in the capacity of private citizen-witness, or Chicago policeman, or some form of federal agent or operative (and that is has) remained a mystery to certain Secret Service agents."

In a press conference Monday in the Federal Building, Skolnick told reporters he doubted that Groth is actually a policeman, or was in 1963. He questioned whether Groth is actually acting "in some other capacity."

Groth was a prominent figure in the controversial December 4, 1969 raid on a west side apartment in which Black Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed in a gunfight. Groth led the detail of more than a dozen state's attorney's police in that raid.

Groth said yesterday that he went on detached service from the Chicago Police Department to become a state's attorney's office policeman on June 30, 1969 in the early days of State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan's administration.

Asked generally if any of Skolnick's charges have merit, Groth said, "Absolutely not. These are irresponsible charges by an irresponsible person."

Groth said that at first he regarded Skolnick's charges and subsequent suit regarding the President's murder as "humorous," but he added, "This is no longer a humorous situation."

Regarding the Secret Service office in Chicago, to which Skolnick claims Groth was a frequent visitor, Groth declared, "I don't even know where the Secret Service office is. I have never been there."

In his suit Monday, Skolnick alleged

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A Daily Calumet
EXCLUSIVE

Denies JFK Ties

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that there was a plot to kill the President when he attended the Army-Air Force football game at Soldier Field in Chicago on November 2, 1963. He alleged that the plot was aborted through the arrest of Thomas Arthur Vallee, then of 4614 N. Paulina, whom Skolnick claims was a double for Lee Harvey Oswald, and the man who was assigned in the plot to kill the President here.

The Army-Air Force game in November of 1963 was to be a major show case for President Kennedy, arranged by Mayor Richard J. Daley, but at the last minute it was announced that the President was under the weather with a virus and his appearance here cancelled.

Vallee was arrested at Wilson and Damen avenues 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 2, 1963 -- the day of the game in Soldier Field.

According to the official Chicago police arrest report, Vallee was driving a 1962 Falcon when he was arrested by Officer Peter Schurla out of Area 1. Groth is listed on the report as a witness to the arrest.

Vallee was subsequently booked at Summerdale (20th) District station, according to the police report, at 1:30 p.m., and charged with a "traffic violation and carrying a concealed weapon."

To Skolnick's questioning of Groth's "witness" status on the police report, Groth told The Daily Calumet that he and Schurla had "worked together" out of Area 1 Task Force for some time. Groth explained that "the routine of the Chicago police department in 1963 was a lot different than it is today." His point in this case was that as the companion officer in a two-man car, Groth was the witness and Schurla the arresting officer.

Skolnick yesterday again questioned why an Area 1 Task Force car operating out of 5700 South Cottage Grove would make a "routine" traffic arrest at 4600 north (Wilson Ave.), many miles away.

Another point raised by Skolnick in challenging the circumstances surrounding Vallee's arrest, is that the official police report under the category, "AKA -- also known as," lists "M. 1. (Rifle)," as an alias for Thomas Arthur Vallee.

It is Skolnick's contention that "M. 1. (Rifle)" is a code name.

The "concealed weapon" confiscated by the officers in the arrest of Vallee was a hunting knife, for which he (Vallee) was charged.

Asked by The Daily Calumet why Vallee's alias was listed as "M. 1. (Rifle)," Groth replied, "That's a good question. I don't know."

When asked what "M. 1. (Rifle)" might mean, Groth replied, "You got me. I don't know."

Sergeant Groth called The Daily Calumet yesterday in response to a call to him the day before relative to the Skolnick suit. At first he said that he could not discuss the matter, noting, "Number One, I don't conduct interviews over the phone." However, he said that he had "heard good things" about The Daily Calumet and its relations with law enforcement, and when assured the conversation was not being "taped," he consented to discuss the Skolnick allegations.

At least two other Chicago police officers who are close friends of Groth's had earlier told The Daily Calumet (1) that Groth "has been with the force a long time," and (2) that he (Groth) "has a good record with the department."